

6 January 1982  
MSK-2001

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report--Seoul Bureau--December 1981

I. GENERAL

1. The 9th of December marked the end of an era, so to speak, at Seoul Bureau when Bureau Chief [ ] and family departed on PCS to new adventures and challenges in Swaziland. An office party was held on the 4th at which [ ] were presented a memento of Korea as a token of esteem and thanks for their unstinting efforts on behalf of the bureau during their stay in Seoul. The deputy chief hosted a large combined farewell and Christmas cocktail party on the 6th for all bureau staff and spouses. Jim's replacement, [ ] is due to arrive on or about 20 January PCS from Key West.

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2. At the 9 December country team meeting Ambassador Walker reminded all personnel of the need for heightened security consciousness in view of the worldwide terrorist threat from Libya. He stressed that the Embassy had no concrete information on any such threat, but noted that many Korean workers periodically return from Libya and there is the possibility of some having been converted to Islam and trained as terrorists. The many U.S. installations in Korea make good targets of opportunity.

3. The ROK Government announced on New Year's Day that the 37-year-old midnight to 4 a.m. curfew would be abolished nationwide on 5 January, much sooner than had been expected. With the upcoming 1988 Olympics in Seoul, the government wants to project an aura of stability for foreign visitors. News of the end of the curfew everywhere except along the northern border and coastal areas has been greeted with almost universal acclaim, with the exception of some housewives who fear their hard-drinking spouses may not come home as early! Assessment of possible impact on bureau operations is now underway.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. The month was marked by heightened tensions along the DMZ, several border incidents, SR-71 overflight protests

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by the DPRK and reports of unusually large-scale North Korean military exercises which apparently prompted dispatch to Korean waters of 7th Fleet elements including the carrier Midway shortly before Christmas and imposition of a communications minimize for several days. Christmas week was especially busy due to PRC Premier Zhao Ziyang's 4-day visit to the DPRK. Staffing was tight with several monitors taking use-or-lose leave. The South Korean political scene fortunately was relatively quiet.

2. To keep editors and other staff more up to date on happenings around the world, the bureau began printing Hong Kong AFP. Reception in Seoul is good throughout the day except for several hours in the early morning.
3. Okinawa Cruising Monitor [ ] conducted a comprehensive STAT survey 27 November-15 December following completion of work on the beverage antenna system. Preliminary results indicated much improved reception overall compared to the previous survey.

B. Communications

The communications minimize on Korea pointed up some deficiencies in FBIS Notice 79-32 which will now be revised. The basic problem concerns responsibility for polling affected consumers on continued need for FBIS traffic during minimize.

C. Lateral Services

- ✓ 1. As a result of a discussion with an Embassy political officer responsible for North Korean political/military affairs, Analyst/Senior Editor [ ] prepared a memo on the significance of two major DPRK anniversaries to be marked in April of 1982 -- Kim Il-song's 70th birthday on 15 April and the 50th anniversary of the Korean People's Army on the 25th -- which the officer said would be passed to concerned members of the local U.S. military community.
- ✓ 2. The Pyongyang TV monitoring project is not being kept as current as we would like. Tapes being received weekly from local supplier contain programs which are at least 2 weeks old from time of broadcast. We have asked for more timely deliveries. Because more current regular coverage commitments usually take priority, we also are making efforts to see that the TV tapes get worked into the regular processing

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backlog so that VSL's can be prepared on a more timely basis. We also learned that the liaison office in this project is now receiving captioned photos from Pyongyang television prepared by the local supplier which are being passed to Headquarters components. ✓

### III. ADMINISTRATION

#### Personnel

1. Due to the planned resignation this summer by Chinese Monitor [redacted] STAT steps have been taken to recruit a replacement as soon as possible. Word of mouth advertising in the local Chinese community has already surfaced four possible candidates who will be tested as soon as all resumes are received and Unit Chief [redacted] returns from STAT maternity leave.
2. Efforts to finally get the Korean unit filled with seasoned personnel received an unwelcome setback when Unit Chief [redacted] announced he is actively seeking other employment, preferably within the U.S. community. His stated reason for wanting to leave is his feeling that he is not really suited to translation work and wants to get back into accounting or some other kind of general office work. He also said shiftwork interferes with his outside activities on behalf of his church and that "it is time to pass the baton to younger men." I personally feel the long-standing problems related to the unified State Department payscale and personnel system and unfulfilled promises on supervisory grades are contributing factors. Strong efforts to dissuade him from this course of action have so far been unsuccessful. STAT
3. [redacted] Korean monitor-trainee, has been making STAT steady progress but not as quickly as we had hoped. At this point his major weakness is inability to produce consistently workable translations that do not require extensive editing. For this reason he is still not working independently 5 months after EOD. For the past 6 weeks he has been piggybacking with [redacted] our best STAT most prolific translator, for intensive training in producing finished copy. We hope to be able to cut the umbilical cord by the end of January which would give us more leeway in scheduling and allow the unit chief more time for supervisory duties.

*I sent  
copy to*  
[redacted]

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4. Our newest and youngest teletype operator, [ ] STAT  
was married on 9 December at a modest ceremony and  
reception attended by many bureau personnel.
5. Bureau Chief [ ] and family departed 9 December STAT  
on PCS reassignment to Swaziland.

IV. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Ambassador and Mrs. Richard Walker hosted two large holiday functions during the month, one at the Embassy Club on South Post for all mission personnel and spouses and another at the Compound I residence for American staff. The Embassy Club party was highlighted by the singing of Christmas carols in Chinese by the Ambassador and several of our monitors.

[ ] STAT  
Acting Chief, Seoul Bureau, FBIS

Attachment:  
Monthly Production Report

cc: Chief, Okinawa Bureau  
Chief, [ ]

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